

IN THE CLAIMS

Sub 1  
1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

generating, on by a first computer, a first license for software installed on the first computer, wherein the first license is generated by the first computer in response to the software being installed;

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obtaining, by the first computer, from a second computer a second license for the installed software, wherein the second license is generated by the second computer;

determining, by the first computer, whether the second license is authentic; and  
replacing, if the second license is authentic, the first license with the second license.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein replacing, if the second license is authentic, the first license with the second license comprises:

setting, by the first computer, a first identifier to associate the first license with the first computer;

determining whether the first identifier matches a second identifier of the second license;

validating a digital signature of the second license;

determining, if the first identifier matches the second identifier and the digital signature is valid, that the second license is authentic; and

replacing, as a result of determining that the second license is authentic, the first license with the second license.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein obtaining from the second computer the second license further comprises:

connecting to the second computer,

providing the second computer with at least a portion of the first license; and

exchanging the first license for the second license.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 4, wherein connecting to the second computer comprises connecting to the second computer via a communications network.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 5, wherein the communications network is the internet.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 5, wherein exchanging the first license for the second license includes formatting data from the first license according to a set of text processing rules and transmitting the formatted data using a text transfer protocol.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising verifying whether the replaced license is valid, including determining whether the replaced license has expired.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 2, further comprising digitally signing the first and second licenses, wherein digitally signing the first and second licenses includes applying a message digest algorithm to a portion of the license not including a length of the license or the digital signature, resulting in a message digest, the message digest being further encrypted with a binary key extracted from the unique identifier.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising:  
a machine-accessible medium including thereon sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause an electronic system to:

generating, on by a first computer, a first license for software installed on the first computer, wherein the first license is generated by the first computer in response to the software being installed;

obtaining, by the first computer, from a second computer a second license for the installed software, wherein the second license is generated by the second computer;

determining, by the first computer, whether the second license is authentic; and  
replacing, if the second license is authentic, the first license with the second  
license.

14. - 24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of Claim 13,  
wherein the sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to  
replace, if the second license is authentic, the second license with the first license  
comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to:

set, by the first computer, a first identifier to associate the first license with the  
first computer;

determine whether the first identifier matches a second identifier of the second  
license;

validate a digital signature of the second license;

determine, if the first identifier matches the second identifier and the digital  
signature is valid, that the second license is authentic; and

replace, as a result of determining that the second license is authentic, the first  
license with the second license.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of Claim 13, wherein the sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to obtain, by the first computer, from the second computer the second license further comprise sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to:

connect to the second computer;

provide the second computer with at least a portion of the first license; and

exchange the first license for the second license.

28. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of Claim 27, wherein the sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to connect to the second computer comprise sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to connect to the second computer via a communications network.

29. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of Claim 28, wherein the sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to connect to the second computer via the communications network comprise sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to connect to the second computer via the internet.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of Claim 13, wherein the machine-accessible medium further comprises sequences of instructions that, when

executed, cause the electronic system to verify whether the replaced license is valid, including determining whether the replaced license has expired.

32. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of Claim 26 further comprising sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to digitally sign the first and second licenses, wherein the sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to digitally sign the first and second licenses include sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to apply a message digest algorithm to a portion of the license not including a length of the license or the digital signature, resulting in a message digest, the message digest being further encrypted with a binary key extracted from the unique identifier.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
selectively refreshing the second license prior to expiration of a predetermined period of time.

34. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 13, wherein the machine-accessible medium further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the electronic system to selectively refresh the second license prior to expiration of a predetermined period of time.